

DAKOTA PACK

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD • SPRING 2016



OPERATION SPARTAN SHIELD

Maneuver Enhancement
Brigade deploys 39 to Kuwait

» DEPLOYMENTS

- Detachment 48 welcomed home from Afghanistan

» TRAINING

- 175th Fighter Squadron participates in Large Force Exercise
- 114th Fighter Wing trains in joint exercise Sentry Savannah

» ACHIEVEMENTS

- Croymans promoted to brigadier general
- Hoekman named new senior enlisted leader
- Gacke named new state command chief



Learn



Experience



Unwind



Play



Explore



Succeed

Start now, at **Western Dakota Tech**

- ✓ Over 25 programs
- ✓ 98% placement rate
- ✓ Expert Instructors
- ✓ Learn by doing with hands-on education
- ✓ Online programs available
- ✓ Military Friendly School
- ✓ FREE Dual Enrollment classes available

*Contact us today for
your own campus tour!*



Western Dakota Tech

The future you want, the education you need.

800 Mickelson Dr., Rapid City, SD 57703

800-544-8765 | 605-718-2565

wdt.edu





Maj. Gen. Timothy Reisch
The Adjutant General

Maj. Anthony Deiss
State Public Affairs Officer

1st Lt. Chad Carlson
Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

Chaplain (Col.) David Gunderson
Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland
Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann
Sgt. 1st Class Don Matthews
Staff Sgt. Charles Butler
Staff Sgt. Tiphany Dvorak
Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee
Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski
Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson
Tech. Sgt. Christopher Stewart
Sgt. Mark VanGerpen
Spc. Dylan Clark
Spc. Kristin Lichius
Pfc. Breanne Donnell
Pfc. Joshua Quandt

Simpsons

PRINTING

Contact us for advertising
p. 605.342.0979
f. 605.342.2053
email: heatherm@simpsonsprinting.com
SimpsonsPrinting.com

Dakota Pack is a commercial enterprise publication, produced in partnership quarterly by the South Dakota National Guard and Simpsons Printing. Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the Departments of the Army and Air Force or the State of South Dakota. All photos are South Dakota National Guard photos unless otherwise credited.

Distribution: Dakota Pack is published for all South Dakota National Guard service members and their families. It is distributed through Simpsons Printing under exclusive written contract with a circulation of 4,500. It is also available at our website: sdguard.ngb.army.mil.

How to reach us: Questions or comments for Dakota Pack should be directed to the SDNG Public Affairs Office: 2823 West Main Street, Rapid City, SD 57702, 605.737.6721, fax: 605.737.6677, ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil.

Submissions: Print and photo submissions of general interest to members of the SDNG, their families, civilian employees, veterans and retirees are invited and encouraged. Please send article and photos with name, phone number, e-mail, complete mailing address and comments to: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil, 605.737.6721. Submissions are subject to editing. Electronic submissions are preferred and digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

DAKOTA PACK

Magazine of the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard



FEATURES

- 11 Passion, duty, experience fuel Soldiers' drive
- 12 114th Airman pursues Air Force special operations
- 14 Hardrocker alumni joins SD Guard for camaraderie
- 16 SD Guard hosts 32nd annual Dining-Out
- 19 SD Guard Soldier wins outstanding musician award

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 ALPHA CORNER
- 4 GUARD NEWS BRIEFS
- THE GUARD STORY
- 6 SD Guard promotes Croymans to brigadier general
- 7 SD Air Guard appoint new command chief
- 7 Hoekman named new SDNG senior leader
- 8 Detachment 48 welcomed home from Afghanistan
- 9 114th Fighter Wing trains in joint exercise Sentry Savannah
- 10 175th Fighter Squadron participates in Large Force Exercise
- FAMILY FOCUS
- 20 SD Guard Airman honors father, Korean War veterans
- 21 Specialty court aims to help struggling veterans
- DIVERSITY FOCUS
- 22 Four lenses training fosters teamwork, leadership skills
- 23 CHAPLAIN'S CORNER
- 24 SNAPSHOTS



VISIT US ON THE WEB: sd.ng.mil

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard

FLICKR: www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard

TWITTER: twitter.com/SD_Guard

On the Cover - Sgt. 1st Class Jason Tebeest, a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, kisses his granddaughter, Hensley, two months, during the unit's deployment ceremony at the high school auditorium in Harrisburg, S.D., Feb. 27. (Photo by 1st Lt. Chad Carlson)



MESSAGE FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

I want to begin by congratulating Command Chief Master Sgt. Jim Welch on his retirement from the South Dakota National Guard. Chief Welch capped his 40-year military career by serving a three-year AGR tour as the first senior enlisted leader of the South Dakota National Guard. He did a great job in that capacity, just as he had done

throughout his entire career. I wish him and Mary the very best as they begin this next chapter of their lives. Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Hoekman has hit the ground running as our new senior enlisted leader and I look forward to working with him on key matters involving our enlisted corps in the years ahead.

It is great to have Detachment 48 safely back on U.S. soil following their successful deployment to Afghanistan. By all accounts they did an outstanding job and added to the already impressive legacy of the unit. On what may sound like a selfish note, it is so nice to have the C-12 back in the state to serve the travel needs of our great organization!

The mobilization ceremony for 39 Soldiers of the Sioux Falls-based 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade was conducted in Harrisburg on Feb. 27. I look forward to visiting both this unit and the 155th Engineer Company in Kuwait in April. Please continue to keep our deployed troops in your prayers.

February 4 was a terrific night for the 32nd National Guard Dining Out in Pierre. Congratulations to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Wright on her selection as the Williamson Militiaman Award recipient. Her dedication to the families of our Soldiers and Airmen over the years has been truly outstanding, making her a great choice for this huge honor. Congratulations to Col. Ed Vanderwolde, his wife, Deanna, and their family for receiving the Adjutant General's Family Award. It is always amazing to me how many hours our family members volunteer to support us. Finally, I want to congratulate Iberdrola Renewables, Buffalo Ridge II Wind Farms for being selected as this year's Pro Patria recipient for South Dakota. We simply cannot do our mission without the support of our employers, and Iberdrola really demonstrated phenomenal support for Tech. Sgt. Brandon Johnson while he was deployed to South Korea.

I recently announced some changes to several senior leader positions. Col. Bill Freidel will be retiring as the Army chief of staff and he will be replaced by Col. Marshall Michels in late April. Brig. Gen. Matt Jamison will retire in May and Brig. Gen. Steve Warren will take over as the assistant adjutant general for the Air Guard. Newly promoted Brig. Gen. Tom Croymans will

move from the director of the joint staff position to the land component commander position assisting Brig. Gen. Kevin Griesse with a number of his key responsibilities as the assistant adjutant general for the Army Guard. Col. Russ Walz will finish up his 10-year stint as the commander of the 114th Fighter Wing and move to state headquarters as director of the joint staff. All of these individuals are superstars, and I consider myself very, very fortunate to be surrounded by such highly competent professionals.

I recently spent several days in Washington, D.C. meeting with the other adjutants general on issues of importance to the National Guard. I will share a few thoughts below from the Air and Army perspectives.

The Air National Guard continues to enjoy tremendous inclusiveness extended to us by Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James and Chief of Staff Mark Welsh. From a national perspective, the challenges are primarily centered on budget limitations. Building a brand new fighter, tanker and bomber simultaneously while maintaining a fleet of aircraft that is the oldest it's ever been is a huge challenge. I believe that we will continue to experience an increasing reliance on the ANG in the years ahead first and foremost due to our competence and professionalism. Additionally, we will be relied upon because it is taking so much money to recapitalize our fleet that the Air Force can't afford to add people. Twenty-five years ago at the start of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, there were approximately one million personnel in the Air Force (includes the Guard and Reserve). Today, there are just 660,000, and most folks would agree that today's world is much more dangerous was it was back then.

The new Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley immediately reached out to the Army National Guard leadership and told us that he considers us part of the U.S. Army. In the months that followed he has continued to demonstrate that spirit of complete inclusiveness as well. He has stated publicly that rather than continuing the scheduled decreases in the size of the Army, he wants to halt the reductions at fiscal year 2017 levels. The National Commission on the Future of the Army had a recommendation to do the same, so hopefully the next president and Congress will be willing to do the same. Acting Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy has also reached out to the TAGs several times since his assignment, so our rift with "Big Army" appears to be in the rear view mirror. That does not however, relieve us of our responsibility to continue to press for excellence and readiness in the SDARNG to protect ourselves from cuts that could still be coming due to budget shortfalls.

As always, I want to thank all of the Soldiers, Airmen, family members and employers of the South Dakota National Guard for everything you do to make our organization so great. This state and nation are forever in your debt.

Sincerely,

Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch
The Adjutant General



MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER

Effective January 2016 I began serving as the South Dakota National Guard's second senior enlisted leader, replacing Command Chief Master Sgt. Jim Welch. I am humbled at being selected to this important position but extremely excited to be able to take care of the Soldiers and Airmen in the South Dakota

National Guard. I will do everything in my power to ensure the TAG's priorities and vision are fulfilled. A little be about me.

I enlisted into the SDARNG in December 1985 with the 200th Engineer Company as a combat engineer/bridge specialist and attended basic and advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. I obtained a secondary occupational specialties as a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist with the 200th and went on to serve as motor transport operator with the 1742nd Transportation Company in 1994.

I had the opportunity to serve in nearly every key noncommissioned officer position from squad leader to command sergeant major to include as an OCS instructor and TAC NCO.

In January 2006, I was selected as the first sergeant for the 727th Transportation Company until the unit's deactivation in September 2007. I went on to serve as the first sergeant for the 740th Transportation Company. In April 2009, I was selected as the command sergeant major

for the 139th Brigade Support Battalion, followed by the 109th Regional Support Group in April 2012, and state command sergeant major in February 2015.

My deployments include service with the 1742nd Transportation Company during Operation Iraqi Freedom from March 2003 to June 2004 and the 139th Brigade Support Battalion during Operation New Dawn in Iraq and Kuwait from June 2011 to April 2012.

I am a graduate of the United States Sergeants Major Academy, hold a bachelor's degree from South Dakota State University in sociology and criminal justice and am a graduate of the South Dakota Law Enforcement Academy and FBI National Academy, Class #259.

In my civilian life, I retired as a captain from the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office in Sioux Falls, having served in law enforcement for 25 years.

I want to thank Command Chief Master Sgt. Jim Welch for his service to the South Dakota National Guard and wish him a very happy retirement. He did a great job and set a very high bar for me to aspire too.

I let the Army Values guide me through every part of my life and I believe that action and deeds speak louder than words. Remember people are watching you all the time and they know if you practice what you preach.

Maintain open and honest communication and take care of your personnel. If there are issues, please ensure we are addressing the problem and not just reacting to the symptom of that problem. Be good to your personnel and yourself.

I look forward to my time in this position and am looking forward to working with every one of you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James A. Hoekman".

Command Sgt. Maj. James Hoekman
Senior Enlisted Leader

DRESSLER PROMOTED TO CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 5

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota Army National Guard promoted Todd Dressler, of Rapid City, to the rank of chief warrant officer 5 during a Jan. 29 ceremony at Camp Rapid.

Dressler began his military service with the SDARNG in January 1984 as a light-wheeled vehicle mechanic in the 854th Engineer Company.

After graduating from Officer Candidate School in July 1995, he was appointed as a warrant officer.

He's attended many schools to include the Adjutant General Warrant Officer Basic Course, the Adjutant General Warrant Officer Advance Course, the Warrant Officer Staff Course and most recently the Warrant Officer Senior Staff Course.

Dressler began his full-time career with the SDARNG in February 1990 and currently serves as Active Guard & Reserve manager in the human resource office.

He deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade as the deputy human resources officer from May 2010 until May 2011.

Some of his awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal for his service in Operation Enduring Freedom, three Meritorious Service Medals, four Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, the Warrant Officer of the Year for 2013 and his proudest decoration, the South Dakota Ribbon for Valor.



SD NATIONAL GUARD TO RECEIVE NEW CYBER PROTECTION TEAM

RAPID CITY – The National Guard Bureau announced that the South Dakota Army National Guard has been selected to receive one of seven new Army National Guard cyber protection teams to be fielded by the end of fiscal year 2019.

As part of ongoing growth of cyber forces throughout the Department of Defense, the Bureau announced plans to activate additional cyber units spread throughout 23 states.

South Dakota will share a 39-member team with North Dakota, Colorado and Utah designed to help protect the nation's critical cyber infrastructure and address emerging cyber threats.

Seven members of the team will be assigned to South Dakota and is expected to be organized

during fiscal year 2018. No decision has been made on where the unit will be based and will be announced at a later date.

"The National Guard provides a critical defensive cyber capability available to governors of all 54 states and territories in support of DoD, federal and state response as part of a layered defense," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. "Cyberspace is critical to both joint military operations and the National Guard's support of national security objectives. To do this, the National Guard continues to develop integrated cyber capabilities and build the skilled cyber workforce that is critical to our operations."



VERCHIO PROMOTED TO COLONEL IN SD NATIONAL GUARD

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota Army National Guard promoted Anthony Verchio, of Hill City, to the rank of colonel during a ceremony, Jan. 9, on Camp Rapid.

He is assigned as the J2 Intelligence Branch chief for Joint Force Headquarters at Camp Rapid.

Verchio began his military service with the U.S. Army in 1987 as a platoon leader, after graduating from the ROTC program from Ball State University. In 1993, upon completing his active duty tour with the 101st Airborne Division, he was assigned to the SDARNG as the maintenance management officer in the 88th Troop Command in Rapid City.

Verchio has served in numerous command and staff positions at the detachment, company, battalion and brigade levels, to include commander of the 777th Transportation

Detachment and the 139th Brigade Support Battalion, training and executive officer with the 109th Regional Support Group and the defense movement coordinator and deputy J3 of the Plans and Training Branch for Joint Force Headquarters.

He has completed two tours of duty: in 1991 as a platoon leader with the Headquarters and Light Maintenance Company, 801st Maintenance Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm, and in 2012 as the commander of the 139th Logistics Task Force in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn.

Verchio has been employed by the Pennington County Sheriff's Office since 1991 and is currently assigned as the special operations lieutenant.

He resides in Hill City with his wife, Karey, and has two daughters, Jessica and Kaitlin.



114TH FW CONGRATULATES DIAMOND SHARP AWARD WINNERS

ST. LOUIS – 114th Fighter Wing first sergeants recognized nine deserving Airmen throughout the unit with the 2015 Diamond Sharp Award, Jan. 10 at Joe Foss Field.

“One tool of praise, the Diamond Sharp Award, is recognized Air Force wide,” said Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Greer, 114th FW first sergeant. “By authority of their commanders, each 114th FW first sergeant’s and South Dakota Headquarters first sergeant has the unique honor to annually present the Diamond Sharp Award to a deserving Airman.”

Nominations for the award are made by squadron first sergeants and front line supervisors for each Airman’s specific achievements and persistent excellence. The award is not limited to a rank or position.

“The Diamond Sharp Award is the first sergeants personal award and it requires great responsibility to award an Airman adhering to our Air Force

core values,” said Greer. “It also includes assessing proper unit training assembly attendance, passing scores on career development courses and physical training, the four solid pillars: mental, social, physical, and spiritual health, and above average job performance.”

According to Greer, Diamond Sharp Award recipients are normally a ‘poster model’ for the Air National Guard and a well-rounded individual, but there is no formal nomination process and there are no critical prerequisites.

2015 Diamond Sharp Award winners:

Master Sgt. Kevin Winter, Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Danny Oaks, Headquarters, South Dakota Air National Guard

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Bones, Civil Engineering Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Nick Blumer, Maintenance Squadron



Tech. Sgt. Jacklynn Small, Logistics Readiness Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Rachel VanBeek, Medical Group
Senior Airman Aaron Engebretson, Security Forces Squadron

Senior Airman Jason Collins, Mission Support Group

Airman 1st Class Alexis Horstman, Operations Support Squadron

SD GUARD, SURINAME MILITARY CONDUCT STRATEGIC PLANNING

PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Three members of the South Dakota National Guard visited the Republic of Suriname, South Dakota’s State Partnership Program nation, in the capital city of Paramaribo to participate in a strategic planning exchange with Suriname military personnel, Jan. 13-15.

The purpose of the event was to build upon a previous exchange on strategic planning conducted last July and facilitate discussions on strategic planning models used by the SDNG and the Suriname Defense Force.

“The goal of the exchange was to share best practices to help each other achieve our organizational visions through the establishment of goals and objectives,” said Lt. Col. Orson Ward, State Partnership Program director for the SDNG and a participant in the exchange.

The SDNG Soldiers met with more than a dozen Suriname senior military leaders from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Military Police, as well as several personnel from the U.S. Military Liaison Office. Other agency participants included

the National Coordination Center for Disaster Relief and members from the Suriname Ministry of Defense.

The exchange allowed Suriname and South Dakota officials to discuss an extended-year strategic plan using a structured planning process. Discussions focused on strategic planning concepts, doctrine requirements, analysis and goal setting.

Ward said another significant aspect of the event was to witness the development of the Suriname Defense Force’s strategic plan that addresses regional threats to Suriname’s economy and illegal trafficking that may affect the security of our partner nation and its citizens.

“Planning focused on increasing public safety and security, reducing illicit trafficking, and promoting social justice were themes discussed throughout the exchange,” said Ward.

During the conference, exchange participants also had the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Edwin Nolan, the recently assigned U.S. ambassador to Suriname.

“We shared with him an overview of the



State Partnership Program, how it aligns with his priorities in promoting the U.S. commitment to its relationship with Suriname,” said Ward. “Additionally, we passed on our adjutant general’s invitation for him to come to South Dakota to celebrate with us this June the 10th anniversary of the South Dakota National Guard and Suriname partnership.”

Ward said the ambassador commented that he had heard of the positive relationship the South Dakota National Guard has established over the past several years prior to his arrival in Suriname.

SD NATIONAL GUARD’S ARMY BAND NAMED FINALIST FOR NATIONAL SUPPLY AWARD

MITCHELL – The U.S. Army announced the South Dakota National Guard’s 147th Army Band as one of two finalists for the Chief of Staff of the Army Supply Excellence Award.

The national award recognizes Army units who demonstrate excellence in supply operations, property accountability and resource management.

The Mitchell-based unit, whose primary purpose is to provide music throughout the spectrum of military operations, for Soldiers and civilians, will compete in the Army-wide modification table of organization and equipment

unit supply category.

The 147th Army Band’s submission packet, prepared by Staff Sgt. Timothy Storly, the unit supply NCO, was so well received that he was asked to allow it to be used as the standard for future Supply Excellence Award submissions.

“It’s important to stress that this selection is for the unit as a whole, not an individual,” said Storly, who also serves as a musician and leads the Music Performance Team: Black Ops. “It speaks to the quality of Soldiers in the Army Band, especially this unit. I have been fortunate enough to have

top-notch leadership that makes it possible for me to do my job to a very high standard.”

The next phase in determining the national winner is an onsite inspection by the SEA evaluation team. SEA program evaluators are scheduled to visit the unit in March and will then compare the supply operations of the band with one other National Guard MTOE unit, in order to select the top unit.

The national award winner is scheduled to be announced by September.

CROYMANS PROMOTED TO BRIGADIER GENERAL

By Pfc. Breanne Donnell

129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota Army National Guard promoted Thomas Croymans, of Aberdeen, to the rank of brigadier general during a Dec. 5 ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid.

Croymans serves as the director of the joint staff and oversees joint strategic planning and training to enhance the readiness of the Army and Air Guard.

“To achieve the rank of brigadier general is truly an honor,” said Croymans during the ceremony. “This is a great accomplishment and I’m thankful for all of those who have helped me throughout the years.”

Guest speaker Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general for the SDNG, expressed his confidence in Croymans to maintain the relationships and readiness for South Dakota.

“People get promoted for their potential, not their performance. You get paid for your performance – you get promoted for the potential that we see in you,” said Reisch.

Reisch recognized Croymans’ 14 years of enlisted experience as a strength in his leadership knowledge and abilities.

“Tom is unique that he spent time as an enlisted Soldier and it shows,” said Reisch. “Enlisted time gives you an opportunity to walk in the boots of those you are leading. He’s worked his way up and performed extremely well at every level.”

A few of the leadership responsibilities Croymans has held throughout his career include commander of the 1742nd Transportation Company, 88th Troop Command, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, 109th Regional Support Group, and chief of staff for the SDARNG.

Croymans spoke of his priorities and goals in his new role as brigadier general.

“With this rank comes high expectations and increased responsibilities,” said Croymans. “I am looking forward to the opportunity to effect change and contribute to the success of this organization. I want to ensure the organization maintains a high level of readiness and make sure our Soldiers and Airmen are resourced with the best equipment and leadership we can provide.”

In his civilian career, Croymans is the regional roads engineer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Great Plains Region.



Sgt. Kristen Croymans, right, and Cadet Jesse Croymans unfurl the ceremonial flag for newly promoted Brig. Gen. Thomas Croymans at Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City, Dec. 5. (Photo by Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski)

Thank you for your service. If you use tobacco, maybe we can return the favor?

Nicotine is a serious addiction and 70% of tobacco users want to quit, but can't. We can help with that. Just give us a call.



1.866.SD-QUITS www.SDQuitLine.com

Tobacco. There's no freedom in it.

SD AIR NATIONAL GUARD APPOINTS NEW COMMAND CHIEF

By Tech Sgt. Luke Olson
114th Fighter Wing

SIOUX FALLS – 2016 will see a new command chief master sergeant in South Dakota Air National Guard as Chief Master Sgt. Jeanne Gacke will replace Chief Master Sgt. James M. Welch, as the new state command chief.

Gacke was appointed to the position Dec. 4, 2015. The command chief position is a traditional Guard member position so Gacke will continue to serve in her full-time role as the 114th Fighter Wing security forces manager.

"It's an honor to serve with and represent the Airmen of the South Dakota Air National Guard," said Gacke. "I want all the Airmen to know that it is my focus to represent them and this unit to the best of my ability as we move forward."

Gacke enlisted with the 114th Fighter Wing Security Forces in January of 2000, brining with her over nine years of active duty experience. She came into the plans and programs section

of security as a staff sergeant, but was quickly given more responsibilities, in part, because of her active duty experience. After 9/11 she was activated with the SFS for over a year. Since then, Gacke has accepted opportunities to become a full time Active Guard and Reserve member with the unit, and climbed her way up the enlisted ranks.

"The mentors I've had were a key piece of the opportunities I have had," said Gacke. "Master Sgt. Jerrad Snyder, and my predecessor retired Chief Master Sgt. Ron Meland, are just a couple of the supervisors and co-workers that trusted me. Without all of my mentors and the opportunities they gave me, I would not be here."

Once Meland retired in 2009, Gacke applied for his position as security forces manager and was selected. That same year, she was honored with the rank of chief master sergeant and became the first female chief master sergeant for the 114th SFS. She has continued on this path becoming

the first female command chief master sergeant for the state of South Dakota.

"I am so excited to work with and represent the Airmen of this unit," said Gacke. "The future holds new opportunities and possibilities for us, and it's an honor to work with and represent the Airmen who will be guiding this unit into that future."

In addition, Gacke wants to let all South Dakota Guard members know that she will always be there.

"No matter how small the problem, I am available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to help you work through it."



HOEKMAN NAMED NEW SDNG SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER

By Pvt. Joshua Quandt and Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – Army Command Sgt. Maj. James Hoekman assumed the role of senior enlisted leader of the South Dakota National Guard from Air Force Chief Master Sgt. James Welch during a change of responsibility ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City, Jan. 9.

Hoekman, who has over 30 years of service in the National Guard, assumed responsibility from Welch, who held the position for three years.

As the senior enlisted leader, Hoekman is responsible for advising Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, on all enlisted matters affecting training and utilization of resources, health of the force, and enlisted professional development concerning the Guard's nearly 4,200

Soldiers and Airmen.

"When I got into the military, my goal was to become the state command sergeant major," said Hoekman. "Taking care of Soldiers, and now Airmen, and veterans is a passion of mine and is the biggest thing I look forward to in this new position."

"With every person that comes into a new position like this, you get new ideas and perspectives," said Reisch. "He will step right into the role and the South Dakota National Guard will not miss a beat."

Hoekman, who grew up in Platte, enlisted into the South Dakota Army National Guard in 1985. He served in various units, from engineer to

transportation companies, across the state and held nearly every key noncommissioned officer position from squad leader to command sergeant major.

"You go into every unit hoping to leave a big footprint and make the unit better before you leave," said Hoekman, who also holds the position of state command sergeant major for the SDARNG. "I'm humbled to have the opportunity to take care of our Soldiers and Airmen."

Welch was the first person appointed to the SEL position within the SDNG. He will retire in March with more than 38 years of military service.

"I want to thank Welch for dedicating a lifetime to the National Guard and the Air Force," said Reisch.



Chief Master Sgt. James Welch, outgoing senior enlisted leader, left, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general, center, and incoming senior enlisted leader, Command Sgt. Maj. James Hoekman, prepare for the change of responsibility ceremony between Welch and Hoekman.

(Photo by Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski)



Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general, left, hands a saber to the new senior enlisted leader of the SDNG, Command Sgt. Maj. James Hoekman, during the change of responsibility ceremony. (Photo by Pfc. Joshua Quandt)

DETACHMENT 48 WELCOMED HOME FROM AFGHANISTAN

RAPID CITY – Six Soldiers from Detachment 48, Operational Support Airlift Command, were welcomed home by family and friends at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, Jan. 23, after returning from duty in Afghanistan.

The South Dakota Army National Guard unit served an eight-month deployment in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, where the unit's mission was to provide aerial reconnaissance and surveillance in support of U.S. and coalition ground commanders in the field.

"It's great to be home," said Sgt. Derek Lebeau, aerial sensor operator. "Instead of seeing (my family) on my phone, or my computer, I get to hug them and keep them close."

Gov. Dennis Daugaard, U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, were a few of the distinguished guest to welcome the unit home.

"I know that I am lucky, because you and people like you won the freedoms I enjoy and take for granted... and you're still today protecting them, and offering them to so many people around the world who want desperately to have what we have. Welcome home," said Daugaard.

"It's kind of humbling to have such a strong showing of the state leadership showing up to welcome us home," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Wayne Walker, Det. 48 commander.

Detachment 48 is a fixed-wing aviation unit comprised of pilots and operations specialists which operated the Medium Altitude, Reconnaissance and Surveillance System (MARSS) King Air 300 aircraft. While on deployment, the unit flew 700 mission totaling 3,000 hours.

This is the third mobilization for the unit, which deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2008 and 2011.

"It's a bit of job satisfaction knowing that we're needed and utilized on a regular basis," said Walker.



Members of Detachment 48, Operational Support Airlift Command, stand for roll call during the unit's welcome home ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Rapid City, Jan. 23. The aviation unit served eight months in Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Don Matthews)



Gov. Dennis Daugaard expresses his appreciation to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Julie Loofbourow during the unit's welcome home ceremony.

(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Don Matthews)

114TH FIGHTER WING TRAINS IN JOINT EXERCISE

By Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland

114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SAVANNAH, Ga. – Eleven F-16's and approximately 175 Airmen of the 114th Fighter Wing, South Dakota Air National Guard, participated in Sentry Savannah 16-1 at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center.

Also taking part in this exercise are Airmen of the 43rd Fighter Squadron and the 2nd Fighter Squadron, both from Tyndall AFB, Florida. Supporting these fighter squadrons are KC-135's from the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard, the 161st ARW, Arizona Air National Guard, and controllers of the 117th Air Control Squadron, Georgia Air National Guard.

"This exercise gives us an opportunity to bring all the pieces of the puzzle together," said Maj. Jeremy Doohen, project officer for the deployment and 175th Fighter Squadron pilot. "The joint cooperation between the active duty and the Guard is an important element of us training with these fifth generation fighters."

In the event that the unit does progress in the future to the F-35 aircraft, these types of deployments give the members of the unit an advanced look into the fifth generation fighters they may someday fly and maintain.

This is the first time the 114th FW has participated in Sentry Savannah. It gives the pilots of the unit an opportunity to integrate in a Large Force Exercise with fifth generation aircraft such as the F-22 Raptor from Tyndall AFB. Missions include defensive counter-air, offensive counter-air, and cruise missile defense. They also benefit from the dissimilar basic fighter maneuvering they do with the F-22's.

"Seeing what the F-22 can do, and how we integrate with them, has been an eye-opening experience," said Lt. Col. Travis Boltjes, 175th Fighter Squadron pilot. "I'm glad to know that the capability they bring to the fight is on our side."

The Savannah CRTC is a unique military air training facility and an element of the Georgia Air National Guard. The facility is one of four CRTC's that the Air National Guard operates and it gives unit's like the 114th FW an opportunity to train in a new environment and with members of other active duty and Guard units from across the U.S.

Along with the pilots, aircraft maintainers also benefit from deploying to the CRTC.

"The repetition that is gained on deployments like this can't be experienced by many traditional Guard members' home station," said Lt. Col. Kevin Curley, 114th Maintenance Group officer in charge.

Because the members of the unit normally serve one weekend a month, these two-week deployments are invaluable for training. As a team, the members are a captive audience and get the opportunity to experience what it is like to have all types of issues arise and how they will be resolved.

"Every shop is proving their value on this trip, we have been extremely busy in the maintenance areas," said Curley. "They start and end each day together and get a chance to work on components of the process they may not see back home on a Guard drill weekend. It really builds comradery."

Pilots and aircraft maintainers are not the only members it takes to make a deployment such as this work; there are several members of the Support Group who also deploy with the unit. Personnel from 114th Security Forces Squadron, 114th Force



F-16's from the 114th Fighter Wing sit alongside F-22's from the 43rd Fighter Squadron, Tyndall AFB, Fl., at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center, Ga., Feb. 1. (Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland)



Members of the 114th Security Forces Squadron shoot 9mm handguns during qualification training at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center. (Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland)



Senior Airman Eric Hunstad, an avionics technician with the 114th Maintenance Group, listens intently as he works with other team members on an F-16 aircraft during Sentry Savannah 16-1. (Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland)

114TH FIGHTER WING TRAINS IN JOINT EXERCISE CONTINUED...

Support Squadron, 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron, 114th Medical Group and areas such as finance, safety and public affairs all work jointly to ensure Sentry Savannah is a success.

Thirty members of the 114th Security Forces Squadron deployed with the unit. They have a two-fold mission in Savannah, real-world flight line security of aircraft, and training that includes weapons qualification, building clearing, and shot, move and communicate training.

"We're not only here to protect our aircraft, we're here to train as a team on important skills

needed to fulfill our mission while deployed and at home," said Chief Master Sgt. Patrick Marino, 114th Security Forces Squadron chief.

The movement of personnel, equipment and aircraft is a delicate process to orchestrate, so members of the 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron also deploy to ensure the success of this process.

"It can be a challenge," said 2nd Lt. Josh Nelson, 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron deployment officer. "With geographical and functional challenges, it's nice to come to a place

like the CRTC where there are local personnel available to direct us. Their support has been outstanding."

"I'm a full-time student and so taking two weeks away from school now has been tough, but it has been worth it," said Senior Airman Makayla McConnell, 114th Security Forces Squadron apprentice on her first unit deployment.

"Being able to work and train with my other team members is what I value the most. It's been a great trip," said McConnell.

175TH FIGHTER SQUADRON PARTICIPATES IN LARGE FORCE EXERCISE

By Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

ST. LOUIS – F-16's from the 175th Fighter Squadron of the South Dakota Air National Guard participated in a Large Force Exercise, Dec. 2-3, in the newly expanded Powder River Training Complex.

For two days, the unit launched and recovered 16 aircraft from Joe Foss Field to the newly designated Military Operations Area, which covers 28,000 square miles and encompasses parts of four different states.

They were not alone. This LFE included various types of aircraft to include F-16s, B-1s and KC-135s from across the country. Air National Guard and active Air Force units participating included the 120th FS, Colorado Air National Guard, 185th ARW, Iowa Air National Guard, the 28th BW, Ellsworth AFB, S.D., the 7th BW, Dyess AFB, Texas, the 22nd ARW, McConnell AFB, Kan., the 141st ARW, Washington Air National Guard, and an E-3 AWACS from Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

The composite force exercise included training in air refueling, air-to-air threats, ground-to-air threats, and F-16's support of B-1 strikes.

"This provides our pilots a close-to-home opportunity for integrated warfighting training over an expansive MOA that we haven't had in the past," said Lt. Col. Mark Morrell, 114th Operations Support Squadron commander.

Morrell, who has been flying the F-16 for over 14 years, went on to add that the expanded Powder River Training Complex will be outstanding for the many components of the military who will train at it.

"This area is over 200 miles across and affords us the opportunity to train in a space much closer to home that is a size similar to what we might encounter when we're not training," said Morrell.

While the Powder River Training Complex has existed for many years, it has just recently been expanded to the size it is now. The expansion allows for some lower flights, longer runs, faster training flights, and more coordinated training sequences that will feel more like actual missions. Cost savings will also be a benefit of this expansion since the unit will not have to travel as far to train on a MOA of this size.

"This exercise highlights the total force concept," said Col. Quenten Esser, 175th Fighter Squadron commander. "The ability to have both active duty and reserve component forces utilizing the expanded Powder River Complex allows our pilots to truly 'train like we fight.' Our pilots were able to work and train with multiple strike aircraft. These assets provide the real world, dynamic and complex training scenario's we need to meet our future taskings."



We'll Make It Happen...

With a HELOC from Highmark.

No appraisal • Quick turnaround

HighmarkFCU.com • 800.672.6365

Offices in Rapid City, Spearfish, Custer & Gillette



PASSION, DUTY, EXPERIENCE FUEL SOLDIERS' DRIVE TO SERVE OVERSEAS

By Sgt. Mark VanGerpen
196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Thirty-nine Soldiers with the South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade are set to deploy to Kuwait after an activation ceremony Feb. 27 in Harrisburg.

The Soldiers of the Sioux Falls unit will fill a variety of roles on the nine-month deployment as they help augment the Army's force protection operations in Kuwait. They will cover everything from publishing orders and tracking missions to providing security for troops.

The call for volunteers came to the Sioux Falls-based unit more than a year ago. All 39 Soldiers specifically chose to leave their homes and families for the better part of a year to serve their country abroad.

Spc. Courtney Larson, an intelligence analyst from Sioux Falls, had never been out of the United States before she volunteered. She comes from a military family with a history of overseas service. Her great-grandfather was a brigadier general and her grandfather served in the Vietnam War.

She joined the deployment as a chance to expand her horizons and deepen her experience.

"I wanted the military background," she said. "A lot of people I work with have that background and in S2 (Army intelligence) that helps you a lot. And, I'm young and wanted a break from school."

Larson will be traveling with Soldiers like Maj. Scott Green, a logistician with two deployments under his belt. Green served in Yankton's Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, deploying to Iraq in 2005-2006 and Kuwait in 2009-2010.

For Green, deploying was a chance to continue the mission he began on his last deployment.

"It felt like an opportunity to be able to support a cause that I'm passionate about," he said. "When I deployed with C Battery we lost some Soldiers, so in a way it feels like finishing the job that we started many, many years ago. I'm looking forward to the group that we have going, and being able to work together and support each other as we integrate into supporting units all over the Middle East theater."

Sgt. Ted Jackson is an information technology specialist from Sioux Falls. He holds bachelor's degrees in computer network security and network system administration from Dakota State University.

Jackson deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, with Pierre's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in 2013. He knows firsthand the importance of communications in the military and volunteered to deploy with that in mind.

"I saw the value in communications throughout my first deployment and the importance of having

good S6 (communications) personnel," he said. "I knew the team I was going with was knowledgeable and I knew I could bring some value to the team as well."

As the Soldiers head to Kuwait, many leave their families behind to carry on life without them. Green, Larson and Jackson said that while their families worried for their safety, they all supported them in their decisions to deploy.

Jackson said there was natural concern from his girlfriend and parents when he told them he wanted to go, but in the end they supported his decision.

"My family is proud of me," Larson added. "My mom's probably not so excited about it, but they're very supportive, that's for sure."

That kind of support deserves the same recognition as the Soldiers receive, Green said.

"The credit needs to go to the families of the Soldiers," he said. "They are they unsung heroes of fights like this. They endure the long hours at home. They keep everything together and the family moving forward as we're overseas. So much credit gets placed on the Soldier, but in reality the family deserves just as much credit as the Soldier themselves."

Capt. Michael Warkenthien holds his niece at his activation ceremony.
(Photo by Staff Sgt. Charles Butler)



Thirty-nine members of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade stand for roll call during the unit's deployment ceremony. (Photo by 1st Lt. Chad Carlson)



Members of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade pose for a unit photo before the unit's deployment ceremony. (Photo by 1st Lt. Chad Carlson)





114TH AIRMAN PURSUES AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS

By Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson
114th Fighter Wing

Senior Airman Cody Thaler, 114th Operations Intelligence specialist, attempts to navigate with his element of eight troops to a checkpoint during a combat survival training exercise at Colville National Forest, Wash. (Courtesy photo)

Senior Airman Cody Thaler, 114th Operations Intelligence specialist, is slated to join the active duty Air Force and begin training to become a member of Air Force Special Operations as a Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) specialist on March 3 at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"I'm ready for a new challenge," said Thaler. "Intel has been great as a mental challenge, but I think with SERE I would get the chance to get the best of both a mental and physical challenge."

Thaler, 25, must earn his way into the SERE specialist training school, held in Fairchild AFB, Wash., by completing a three-week selection course at Lackland AFB and pass the Physical Ability and Stamina Test. The purpose of the PAST test is to assess a candidate's current physical condition for potential entry into the SERE specialist career field to become an instructor.

The test is comprised of several events and the candidate must meet minimum requirements in every event in order to pass. The events include: surface swimming, 1.5 mile run, and pull-ups/sit-ups/push-ups. Each event is evaluated on specific time parameters and exercise form mechanics.

"I've done a lot of strength and endurance training over the years, so my main focus was to add more running and learn how to swim properly for the PAST," said Thaler. "The swim is only 200 meters, but being comfortable in the water and learning proper technique was probably the hardest part of training."

Thaler first became passionate about the career field by completing the combat survival training course (S-V-80) as a requirement for the intelligence career field. The majority of trainees at the Air Education and Training Command USAF SERE School are Air Force aircrew members and intelligence personnel. It teaches 15 different courses to approximately 18,000 students at four locations annually. The schools mission is to provide at risk of

isolation personnel with the skills and confidence to 'Return with Honor.'

"It was a unique challenge and a different type of training because it takes people out of their element," said Thaler. "You are actually learning how to survive under any condition should an aircraft go down. You have to learn how to get food and water and you aren't provided much at all."

While on a recent deployment to Southeast Asia, Thaler sought out the SERE specialists there and through that connection he was provided the opportunity to aid in a few personal recovery training exercises. He role-played an isolated downed pilot so the aircrew from an A-10 Thunderbolt II could perform a rescue mission. He also played a similar role for open ocean water survival training where aircrew piloting a U.S. Army UH-60M Black Hawk performed a hoist rescue exercise while Thaler acted as a downed pilot stranded on a raft.

"A lot of those training exercises really appealed to me," said Thaler. "When I returned from Southeast Asia I was dead set on wanting to become a SERE specialist."

SERE Specialist Technical Training is a five-and-a-half month course consisting of 11 phases of training conducted in several different situations and environments. Upon completion, a SERE specialist is an expert on the methods used to survive in the arctic, desert, open ocean, jungle, mountain regions, in-combat and captivity situations.

"I'm looking forward to the new challenge, and I definitely feel ready to take on this new adventure," said Thaler.

After successfully completing the training, SERE specialists are ready to take their place as one of just over 400 SERE specialists in the Air Force. SERE specialists also earn the right to dawn the SERE beret, SERE specialist arch, and the AETC instructor badge.



Ready to serve you.

Start your Master's,
Bachelor's or Certificate.
Online.

At South Dakota State University, we are dedicated to providing military members, veterans and their families the support they need to transition from military service to a college education.

SDState Online offers more than 30 online degrees taught by the same professors who teach on campus, providing you with affordable and exemplary distance-learning opportunities.



SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

SD STATE ONLINE

distance@sdstate.edu

605-688-5585

sdstate.edu/online



Spc. Carl Johnson and his wife, Kellie, chat with members of the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment at an alumni basketball game, hosted by the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann)

FROM THE COURT TO THE BATTLEFIELD HARDROCKER ALUMNI JOINS SD GUARD FOR CAMARADERIE

By Spc. Kristin Lichius
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The basketball players file out of the locker room. Music plays over the loud speakers and the athletes begin their warm-up routines. The familiar squeak of sneakers on the polished court, the pounding of basketballs being dribbled and passed, and the excited chatter of the gathering crowd echoes throughout the gym as one player glances at his entourage seated courtside.

The entourage, made up of Soldiers in uniform, begins taking photos and video of the 6'10" player, cheering him on like he's an NBA star.

This player, who adorns the #40 alumni jersey of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, is Spc. Carl Johnson, a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Basketball has always been an essential part of life for Johnson. He was a natural for the sport; he played since his earliest years in grade school, and throughout high school and college.

After earning his bachelor's degree in

December of 2012, Johnson and his wife, Kellie, started their family. But for Johnson something was still missing; the need to be part of a team didn't fade after hanging up his jersey.

"I played basketball throughout college and then it just ended," said Johnson. "Everyone moves on with their lives and their families and you're no longer part of a team."

It was one of Johnson's friends who brought up the possibility of becoming a member of the SDARNG.

"He told me he wanted to get more active and that he missed the camaraderie of being on the basketball team," said Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Harris, a member of the SDARNG. "I told him about the positives about being in the Guard and that I have met the most reliable and the best people across the country in the military."

On March 10, 2014, Johnson raised his right hand to serve in the SDARNG.

Harris gave Johnson a few tips commonly given to Soldiers heading off to basic training.

"Do what you are told, keep your head down and if the drill sergeant doesn't know your name by the seventh week you are doing a great job," said Harris. "I

Spc. Carl Johnson warms up before the SDSM&T alumni basketball game. (Photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius)



gathered though that advice didn't apply to Johnson standing a head taller than everyone else."

Johnson had to get a medical waiver to join the military since he is two inches taller than the maximum Army height allowance chart.

Once Johnson graduated basic training, he attended advanced individual training at the Defense Information School to train as a public affairs specialists.

Shortly into his Army training, Johnson realized being a member of the Guard is similar to being on a basketball team.

"I think one of the major things that you learn is mental resilience," said Johnson. "You learn how to push yourself beyond what you thought you were capable of. You learn how to be part of a team and to care about other people more than yourself. If you care about the guy next to you, you'll be on a successful team."

His new team is the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment where he serves as a journalist telling the story of the National Guard.

"Being a part of a team is about looking outside of yourself," said Johnson. "I think if you're always self-focused life gets kind of bleak. When you're focused on other people life becomes more meaningful."

His new coach, also known as the commander, sees Johnson's teamwork mentality as a positive addition to the MPAD.

"I appreciate the leadership, initiative and desire to be a part of a team that Spc. Johnson has," said Capt. Eric Tobin. "I believe this was engrained into him from years of hard work on the basketball court. These traits serve him well as a Soldier."

Along the way, Johnson always relied heavily on the people around him. His family, wife, teammates and his coach played vital roles in helping him to

succeed and reach his goals.

"We were fortunate to have Carl in the program and fortunate to have him back here now," said Jason Henry, SDSM&T head basketball coach before the alumni game. "The Guard is fortunate to have him too. He's a great guy."

The clock begins to tick down and the "swoosh" of the ball flying through the net to make the last points of the night can be heard just as the blare of the final buzzer sounds. The crowd cheers as the players, young and old, line up to shake hands and reminisce about the good old days. Johnson leaves the court and walks up to greet his new team, the Soldiers from the 129th MPAD.

"I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to play basketball and I'm thankful for my family and the opportunities that we have in this country," said Johnson. "I'm thankful to be in the Guard."

Spc. Carl Johnson and Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski, of the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, review photographs for a news release at drill. (Photo taken by Pfc. Breanne Donnell)



Spc. Carl Johnson goes in for a layup during the alumni basketball game hosted by the SDSM&T.

(Photo by Sgt. Rachel Korzeniewski)





SD NATIONAL GUARD HOSTS 32ND ANNUAL DINING-OUT

By 1st Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs Office

The South Dakota National Guard hosted its 2016 Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, Feb. 4. The annual tradition has brought Guardsmen from across the state together for a formal evening for the last 32 years.

The atmosphere, while formal, includes deep-rooted traditions which lighten the mood and provide both members and guests not only plenty of laughs, but a chance to learn some of the organization's history, traditions and an opportunity to recognize individual and unit achievements.

"For the last 32 years, this annual event has been an excellent forum to celebrate the organization's proud history and traditions," said Lt. Col. Brendan Murphy, executive officer to the SDNG adjutant general. "This event provides the Guard an opportunity to honor several individuals for their outstanding support to the National Guard and highlight our significant accomplishments to the

Iberdrola Renewables, Buffalo Ridge II Wind Farm is presented with the 2015 South Dakota Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Pro Patria Award during the South Dakota National Guard Dining-Out. Gov. Dennis Daugaard presents the award to Nick Thiel, center, plant manager, and Tech. Sgt. Brandon Johnson, center right. Also pictured from left is Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, and Mr. Ron Mielke, ESGR-SD chair. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)

community, state and nation."

A video highlighting the many accomplishments made by the men and women of the SDNG in 2015 was shown in addition to comments from Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the SDNG adjutant general. The National Guard also recognized a family, an employer and a public servant with awards recognizing their contributions to the SDNG mission.

Pro Patria Award - Iberdrola Renewables, Buffalo Ridge II Wind Farm

The awards portion of the dining-out began by presenting Iberdrola Renewables, Buffalo Ridge II Wind Farm with the 2015 South Dakota Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Pro Patria Award.

The Pro Patria Award is presented annually to one employer in the state who provides the most exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

"Since 9/11, our National Guard and Reserve have been heavily relied upon as part of the total military force," said Maj. Lona Christensen, executive director for the SD ESGR committee. "Iberdrola realizes the importance of a strong force and provides support and opportunities to members of the Armed Forces."

Tech. Sgt. Brandon Johnson, a member of the South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Maintenance Squadron, works as a wind energy technician with Iberdrola and nominated his



employer for the award.

During Johnson's deployment this past year, Iberdrola hung a flag in his office and a sign that read, "Called to active duty" so all would remember when they saw the empty office.

Johnson's team also placed a lighted flag on top of one of their wind turbines, which remained there for the duration of his deployment. To do this, they had to design a special stand and pole with a light that could withstand the high winds at to the top of a wind turbine. They presented him the flag upon his return.

Iberdrola also hired a company to create a three-part video series, about Johnson and the company's commitment to him and his service.

Johnson's co-workers were encouraged to download an app for their phones and maintain regular communication with him during his deployment.

Other support came in the form of care packages, co-workers checking in on the family, and providing assistance when needed.

"Family members knew they could call without hesitation if assistance was ever needed, but it wasn't necessary to call, as someone was always stopping by to check in with his family," Christensen said. "The family was told that all of the postage for their care packages would be covered by the company."

"Iberdrola made this the easiest deployment I have had so far," Johnson said.

"Employers are inextricably linked to the nation's defense by sharing their most precious assets, their employees," said Christensen. "Iberdrola Renewables, Buffalo Ride II Wind Farm is deserving of this recognition for their

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Wright, center right, is presented with the 2015 Williamson Militiaman Award by, from left, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, Gov. Dennis Daugaard and retired Maj. Gen. Ronald Williamson, during the South Dakota National Guard Dining-Out. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)

outstanding contributions to our military services. Iberdrola's leadership exemplifies the patriotic spirit that is alive and well here in our great State of South Dakota."

The Williamson Militiaman Award – Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Wright

The SDNG next awarded the 2015 Williamson Militiaman Award to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lynn Wright.

The Williamson Militiaman Award, established in 1987 by Maj. Gen. Ronald F. Williamson, recognizes an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of the country.

Wright has been serving both state and nation for over 40 years in uniform, beginning with her 1975 enlistment into the U.S. Army. Following her time on active duty, she went on to serve in the SDNG in various personnel services positions at the company and battalion level. In 1990, she became a part of the Warrant Officer Corps.

"She has served in many roles or additional duties alongside her primary military position, to include the Joint Force Headquarters sexual assault response coordinator, unit victim advocate and most recently in the protocol section of the Golden Coyote Training Exercise," Reisch said. "However, the single greatest enduring contribution, and her passion, is to the family readiness of SDNG service members and their families."

While serving as a traditional Soldier, one who serves one weekend a month and two weeks a year, she recognized family programs was not well supported and took it on herself to bolster that program.

Wright realized that the educational resources and communication traditionally sent through the service members were not reaching the families so she targeted families directly to provide resources, including educational symposiums where she fostered professionalism training among family readiness volunteers.

She continued to invest herself in training and mentoring unit and Family Readiness Group leadership on the importance of family readiness, providing technical guidance on processes, regulations, documentation and helped sustain lead volunteers and Family Readiness Group programs during long-term deployments.

"Before there was the contracted South Dakota Family Assistance Center as we know it today – she was advocating for families," said Reisch.

"During annual training, she provided emergency and routine messages from the Family Assistance Center to units in the field and ensured, in the event of a family emergency, Soldiers had adequate transportation home. During Operation Desert Shield/Storm, she established a Family Assistance Center that provided support to the families of Soldiers deployed.

"Before there was a South Dakota National



Col. Ed Vanderwolde, second from right, 114th Fighter Wing, his wife, Deanna, and daughters, Nichole and Brooklyn, are presented with the 2015 Adjutant General's Family Award by Gov. Dennis Daugaard, left, and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, right, SDNG adjutant general, during the South Dakota National Guard Dining-Out. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)

Guard Youth Program as we know it today – she was initiating training designed to increase the self-esteem of service members' children, mentoring youth at the Custer Youth Camp program or assisting with worship for young people in grades 5-8," Reisch said. "Even today, she can be found at nearly every youth program event.

"Before there was the Strong Bonds marriage enrichment program or suicide prevention training as we know it today – she was working with the State Chaplain's Office to develop marriage enrichment and suicide prevention programs," Reisch said.

"But above all things related to family readiness is her love and passion for the Family Readiness Group volunteers," said Reisch. "She recognized that strong military families are a retention tool in the hand of the unit commander; and strong, confident, well-trained and supported volunteers make for a strong family readiness program. She has been a willing advocate for the Family Program, working tirelessly at providing Family Program training and assistance to volunteers and units in the state ensuring all military family representatives and civilian volunteers are aware of all training support and programs available to them."

The SDNG estimates that Wright has conducted hundreds of volunteer trainings, impacting several hundred, if not thousands, of service members and volunteers and every unit in the SDNG.

"Without a doubt, she is truly the expert in South Dakota on family readiness," said Reisch. "Nationally recognized and considered a go-to person in the family readiness program world, her direct mentorship has led to three South Dakota Army National Guard units receiving the prestigious Department of Defense Reserve Affairs

Family Readiness Awards – just in the last four years alone."

Wright has served the SDNG Family Readiness Program as a traditional Soldier, on short-term orders and most recently, for the past 11 years, as a contract family readiness support assistant.

"Her emphatic demeanor has inspired and maintained high morale and team spirit in the Family Program for nearly 30 years," said Reisch.

Past recipients of the award include: Former Adjutants General Phil Killey and Harold Sykora; former U.S. Senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson; former Governors William Janklow and Michael Rounds; and current Governor Dennis Daugaard.

The Adjutant General's Family Award – The Vanderwolde Family

To conclude the awards portion of the evening, Reisch awarded the 2015 Adjutant General's Family Award to the Vanderwolde family.

"The Vanderwolde family is the epitome of the word volunteer," Reisch said. "They are giving by nature, and do so with joy and goodness in their hearts.

"It's never a question of if they will volunteer; it's a matter of 'what are they going to do next' that gives the essential backbone to the Family Volunteer Group and the South Dakota Air National Guard," added Reisch.

The Vanderwolde family has been volunteering with the South Dakota Air National Guard for more than 15 years, on events ranging from children's holiday parties to youth programs to

supporting deployed members.

"As we look to support our fellow Airmen, we can always count on this family to provide home-cooked meals to families who might need the extra help," said Reisch. "Deanna is the go-to for families when they have a hardship or are in need of support. She is a role model for our younger families helping guide their path during challenging times.

"Nichole and Brooklyn have also been active with the volunteer group since they were young," Reisch added. "As participants of many of the events, the girls were motivated into volunteering to help with these programs as they got older. They have participated in numerous activities but their true love is the Military Youth Camp."

Both girls started as a youth participants which grew into junior counselors and then to counselor. Nichole has been invested in the youth program for over 10 years. Brooklyn has not only been a wonderful asset to the youth camp but she also been serving on the South Dakota Youth Council for the past two years.

"Because of their vast experience, Ed, Deanna, Nichole, and Brooklyn are a family we turn to when we need to talk through new ideas or put new concepts into motion. They are ready and willing to do anything, anytime," said Reisch. "The Vanderwolde family is the pillar of excellence when it comes to the South Dakota National Guard. They are dedicated to the service members and their families at all costs. We are proud to honor their dedication to our Wing."

SD NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIER WINS OUTSTANDING MUSICIAN AWARD

By 1st Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs Office

Staff Sgt. Timothy Storly, of Mitchell, a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 147th Army Band, was named a recipient of the Col. Finley R. Hamilton Military Outstanding Musician Award.

The award acknowledges U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard enlisted musicians, and honors the memory of Col. Finley R. Hamilton, U.S. Army (retired), who succumbed to cancer while serving as president of the National Band Association.

Recipients of this distinguished award exhibit outstanding musical and leadership excellence.

Storly, a native of Aberdeen, enlisted into the SDARNG as a trombone player in 1999.

"I didn't join the Guard until after I had already graduated college and was a high school band director," Storly said. "At the time, I looked at it as a great opportunity to perform music and have to admit I was excited to finally put on the uniform. For many years I had considered an active military career."

In 2004, an active military career became reality when Storly accepted a fulltime position as the 147th Army Band's unit supply sergeant. In addition to his fulltime responsibilities, he continued performing with the trombone and became the noncommissioned officer in charge of a performance team.

The 147th Army Band has seven different performance teams, which include: the 147th Concert Band; the 147th Marching Band; Black Ops (eclectic pop and easy listening); Drive On (popular music ranging from country to pop); FTX (horn-line, vocal, and rhythm-section group); Mission Essential Brass (brass group), and SGT Rock (popular music ranging from pop to classic rock).

Demonstrating his outstanding musical talent, Storly earned his C1 additional skill identifier at the U.S. Army School of Music while

attending Senior Leader Course.

"A Charlie One (C1) certification means he's one of the best players in the Army," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Terry Beckler, commander of the 147th Army Band. "That certification means he would be qualified to play in the premiere Army Band."

But Storly doesn't see himself leaving the 147th Army Band anytime soon.

"These days, I see the single most appealing aspect of the Army Band is the people I serve with," Storly said. "We know each other so well, like family. We don't leave that behind when we walk out the door on Sunday following closing formation either."

Throughout the month, Storly said band members communicate with each other. Sometimes it's to iron out details on a piece of music they're working on at home, other times it's just because they really care about how everyone is doing.

"In the band, we encourage and affirm each other," Storly said. "There have been times when I've needed that kind of support. It's become about the people. You can't force that. It just happens when great Soldiers are together doing something they love."

Since receiving his C1 certification, Storly has taken it upon himself to learn other instruments so that he can lead another of the 147th's Music Performance Teams. He's now playing guitar and leading Black Ops, which plays for both military and civilian functions.

"Being such a strong musician and leader in our unit, we thought he'd be a great candidate to submit for this award," Beckler said. "He's one of the best musicians in the Army Band program. It's nice that we have him in South Dakota."

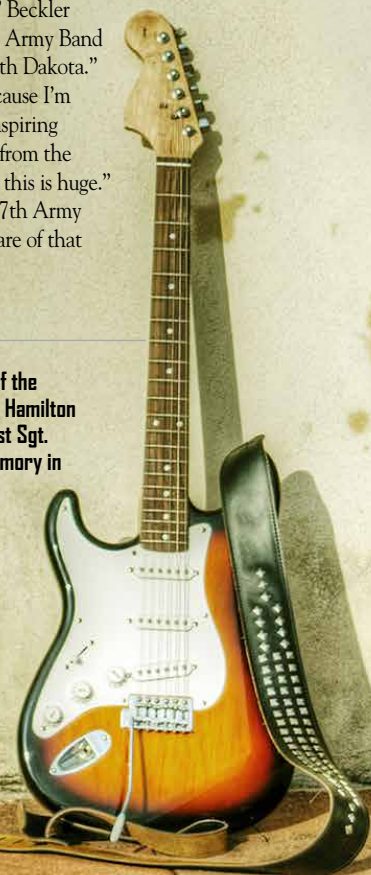
"I was shocked to receive this award because I'm surrounded by a unit full of talented and inspiring musicians," said Storly. "To have a Soldier from the South Dakota National Guard selected for this is huge."

The commander agreed and said the 147th Army Band is made up of several musicians that are of that caliber.

"I feel pretty pretty lucky," said Beckler.



Staff Sgt. Timothy Storly, right, a member of the 147th Army Band, receives the Col. Finley R. Hamilton Military Outstanding Musician Award from 1st Sgt. Tim Schorn, Feb. 7, at the National Guard armory in Mitchell. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Barb Jensen)



SD Airman honors father, Korean War veterans

By Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

“I wasn’t planning to salute all 14 of the Korean War veterans present the day my dad asked me to present his award, it just seemed like the right thing to do,” said Master Sgt. Kevin Winter, South Dakota Air National Guard 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief and son of Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal recipient Ervin E. Winter.

Winter was more than proud to dress up in his Air Force service uniform and travel to Mitchell to assist with the Jan. 12 ceremony. What he did not expect was the overwhelming emotion showed by the veterans as he saluted each one of them, shook their hands and thanked them for their service more than 63 years ago.

From 1950-1954, South Korea received assistance from 16 countries, including the United States, in its defense against North Korea. At peak strength, the U.S. had 348,000 troops committed to Korea’s aid.

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Sec. Larry Zimmerman saw the need to have the veterans from “The Forgotten War” honored. After contacting officials within the Korean Embassy, who were more than willing to have our veterans recognized, the January ceremony was scheduled in Pierre.

While state officials and dignitaries visiting from South Korea gathered in Pierre, veterans who could not make the trip met at VFWs where they watched the ceremony live on PBS and took part in local recognition ceremonies.

“Hundreds of Korean War veterans were honored in a ceremony statewide — some in the Capitol Rotunda, and others in their own counties,” said Zimmerman.

Following comments from Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Sungchoon Park, the head of Korea’s Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, family members were welcome to personally present Korean War veterans with the Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal.

“As I placed my dad’s medal around his neck, stood at attention and saluted him, the veteran sitting next to him had a beaming smile on his face and a well of tears,” said Winter. “It just seemed right to continue down the line and salute each one of them.”

So that’s exactly what he did.

“It felt real good to be remembered today,” said Ervin, as tears welled up in his eyes. “I’m just sad many of us have passed on and won’t be remembered.”

Ervin’s family has a long line of service to their country. Between himself, his son Kevin, who is approaching over 30 years of military service, and three other sons who served, the family will have 100 years of military service this summer.

Winter said his father is a man of few words, but he knows that the tears in his eyes that day, as he saluted him, spoke volumes about what the medal means to him and all the other Korean War veterans who were honored.



Master Sgt. Kevin Winter, 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, sits with his father, Ervin E. Winter, following a Jan. 12 ceremony in Mitchell where Korean War veterans were presented the Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal. (Courtesy photo)



Master Sgt. Kevin Winter salutes a Korean War veteran presented with the Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal in Mitchell. (Courtesy photo)

Specialty court aims to help struggling veterans

By Maj. Anthony Deiss
SDNG Public Affairs Office

The transition from a war environment can be a challenge for returning service members. Many veterans return with physical injuries or mental illnesses, which in some cases may lead to substance abuse, violence and crime.

Throughout the United States, there are currently 229,000 veterans in jails and prisons, 400,000 veterans on probation, and another 75,000 on parole. Nearly 10 percent of the U.S. prison population is made up of veterans.

To help address the growing problem in South Dakota, specialty courts have been created in several counties to offer military veterans who break the law mentors and services instead of jail time. Known as Veterans Treatment Court, it is designed to help struggling veterans get their lives back on track after an arrest.

The goal of the court is to help rehabilitate veterans and keep them from offending again.

South Dakota's first Veterans Court was piloted in Codington County last year, with a second court starting in Minnehaha County in January, and plans are underway for a third in Pennington County.

Proponents for the program say the court system has seen a growing number of criminal cases involving veterans battling drug and alcohol addiction and mental health disorders.

Second Circuit Magistrate Judge John Hinrichs, who helped implement the court in Minnehaha County, estimates since 2014 about 1,000 criminal cases in Minnehaha County have involved veterans. Many of their struggles are a direct result of time spent serving in the armed forces, he said.

"We owe it to [veterans] to give them the best possible result and outlook when they come through the criminal justice system," said Hinrichs, during the signing of the "Memorandum of Understanding and Commencement," for Minnehaha County in Sioux Falls.

South Dakota Army National Guard State Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Hoekman, who has deployed twice, has seen the effects war can have on a returning veteran.

"I know personally Soldiers who have suffered from PTSD, from traumatic brain injury, from substance abuse and depression," said Hoekman, during the signing of the MUC. "At the time, they were too proud to ask for the help and they self-medicated."

Hoekman, who recently retired as a captain in the Minnehaha Co. Sheriff's Office, has been a strong advocate for the new court and stresses there is much need for the program.

"There is a link between the stress of military service and involvement in the court system," said Hoekman. "There are a growing number of veterans appearing in court rooms with substance abuse issues. Veterans Treatment Courts present an opportunity for us to come to the aid of the men and women in

uniform who are suffering as a result of their sacrifice to this country."

The implementation of the new court came after several years of research by county judicial and law enforcement officials who began studying ways to help veterans who break the law. The state's latest specialty court will hear misdemeanor and low-level felony cases involving veterans.

However, court officials say the program is not a get out of jail free card.

Each veteran would attend an 88-week program. During that time, they would have to make all court appearances and be tested for drugs and alcohol – just like anyone else going through the court system. Participants would also be paired with a mentor who also served in the armed forces, to encourage them and keep them accountable.

To be eligible for the program, veterans would first have to go through a screening process to ensure their problems are connected to their military service. Court officials say violent offenders will not be allowed into the program because there is still an obligation to keep the community safe.

In order to graduate from the program, veterans must demonstrate that they can be productive members of society.

Hoekman says the program is designed to set veterans up for success for after graduation.

"The program is structured to facilitate participant sobriety, increase compliance with treatment and other court ordered conditions, improve access to Veterans Administration benefits and services, improve family relationships and social support connections and improve life stability," he said.

The country's first veterans' court was created in Buffalo, New York, in 2008. Since then about 200 have been established across the country.

Hoekman said Veterans Treatment Courts have had the highest rate of success compared to all other specialty courts across the country.

Court officials agree and say vet courts have a 90 percent success rate to rehabilitate veterans and improve public safety.

"Better results means them not offending again, them becoming law abiding citizens... That's ultimately what we hope," said Second Circuit Judge Mark Salter.

"This is where you get to the root of the problem," added Hoekman. "You treat and correct the problem and make this person a successful member of society. It's one step closer in helping vets make a smoother transition into society."

Even with all the success veterans courts have shown, challenges still lie ahead.

"There will be challenges because the program is very regimented and you are trying to change behavior," said Hoekman. "But as data has shown, it is worth it because of the high success rate of veterans who complete the program."

The biggest obstacle however may be getting veterans to come forward.

"We have to inform the veterans and public that asking for help is a sign strength and not a weakness," said Hoekman. "Veterans have earned these benefits and we have to stop the stigma that if you enter the criminal justice system it automatically makes you a bad person with nothing left to give to society."

"There is a process," continued Hoekman. "They have to self-report that they have served in the military and meet additional criteria to be in the program. It all comes down to communication with the courts."

To be eligible for the program, veterans must meet the following criteria.

The veteran must be charged with or have been convicted of a criminal offense in the county and that case must form the basis of the veteran's participation in Veteran's Treatment Court.

The veteran cannot have been charged with murder, manslaughter, rape, or felony sexual assault.

The veteran must have been diagnosed with a mental illness or treatable behavioral disorder such as (but not limited to) post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and/or substance abuse or dependency. During the screening process, a nexus between the illness or disorder and the veteran's service must be established to a reasonable degree.

The state's attorney must consent to the veteran entering the Veterans Treatment Court.

After a screening process, the Veterans Treatment Court Team must approve the admission of the veteran to Veterans Treatment Court.

The veteran must pose no risk or danger due to uncontrollable behavioral problems.

Eligibility for Veteran's Administration benefits is not a prerequisite for an individual to be admitted to Veterans Treatment Court.

Hoekman says he's seen the results and is confident in the success of the program.

"Veterans change their demeanor and attitude, have a renewed sense of pride, accomplishment and motivation, leave the program sober and stable and many have their charges reduced, dismissed or receive a sentence that does not include incarceration," said Hoekman.

Just as veterans have fought for their country, the Veterans Treatment Courts serve as a way for the criminal justice system to do its part in fighting for the nation's veterans – helping them to overcome the issues and obstacles in their lives and return to an honorable and productive lifestyle.

"Veterans have raised their hands and volunteered to protect our country, our Constitution, and its citizens," said Hoekman. "We owe it to the veterans, who as a result of their service have entered the criminal justice system, to help them become successful law abiding citizens in our state."

FOUR LENSES TRAINING FOSTERS TEAMWORK, LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann
SDNG Public Affairs Office

Soldiers and Airmen in the South Dakota National Guard are learning how to improve teamwork and leadership skills through Four Lenses Discovery training.

Four Lenses training is designed to improve interpersonal relationships within units by providing an understanding of the four different personality types.

"I wanted my unit to go through this training to learn how to be better leaders," said Lt. Col. Peter Jerzak, 82nd Civil Support Team commander. "The Four Lenses training makes you try to understand different people. To talk effectively to some people you have to talk differently.

"You have to understand how people think and what appeals to their sense of motivation to get results," continued Jerzak.

A common request from units across the state is to receive training that allows for better team cohesion, said 1st Lt. Carstin Jerzak, the SDNG state equal employment manager and course instructor.

The 82nd CST is one of the first SDNG units to receive the training.

"The South Dakota National Guard has great resources and great people, but we still need to learn how to bring that all together," said Carstin. "I am teaching the basic foundational personality perspectives that the Four Lenses training offers."

The training first includes an assessment which identifies each individual's personality profile.

Members are then divided into four groups based on the four archetypal temperaments from which all personality styles are derived.

Hands-on activities then illustrate the differences in the four groups and how they think, feel and act the way they do.

The Guardsmen go through exercises that explain different motivators and stressors and how each group will typically react to each and the best way to interact with temperaments from each of the four groups.

Members of the CST said they learned a lot about themselves and the people they work with.

"I now have a better understanding that my supervisor has the type of personality that is very detailed orientated," said Sgt. Michael Borbely. "So things like checklists and attention to detail are important to him."

While some challenges come from working with people who have a different temperament than their own, Carstin said the Four Lenses training leverages people strengths to achieve results.

"Knowing each other's personality style allows a team to play to each individuals' strength," said Carstin. "By learning the temperaments of their fellow team members, they can overcome challenges and come together to accomplish their mission. Overcoming our differences and still working together is really what this is all about."

U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Dustin Clement, list the things that are important to his group's type of personality during the Four Lenses Discovery training. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann)



U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Borbely, a member of the South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team, participates in the Four Lenses Discovery training at Ellsworth Air Force Base. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann)



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Carstin Jerzak, South Dakota National Guard's state equal employment manager, instructs the Four Lenses Discovery training to the 82nd Civil Support Team. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann)





BACK TO THE FUTURE

Grandma asked her five-year-old grandson, "Billy would you please go out on the back porch and get the broom?" Billy went to the porch but it was very dark on the porch, so he came back empty handed. Grandma asked him why he didn't have the broom and Billy answered, "Grandma it is dark and scary on that porch." Grandma smiled and said, "Billy do you remember how at church they told you God is everywhere?" Billy

answered, "Yes I do." Then Billy said, "Is God out in the porch?" Grandma answered, "Yes, God is." So Billy, with new courage, went to the porch and pushed open the door, reached his hand into the darkness and said, "God would you please hand me the broom?"

Twenty six years ago I shared that story while attending Chaplain Officer Basic Course at Fort Dix. The sermon was based on the words from Psalm 23 "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil for You (God) are with me." At the end of our training, all of us stood at attention as our course leader told us, "One third of this group will be out of the military in less than three years." At that time I thought, "That's me! I'm in this for the short

haul." I figured I would be done in three years but that was 25 years ago. I'm still in but why did I stay in?

I could probably come up with a 101 reasons, but the simplest reason is this: To serve my Lord by serving people. I entered the pastoral ministry in order to help people know what God has done for them. As a chaplain, I'm able to do that same ministry in a military setting. We like to say in the Chaplain Corps, "Military Chaplains bring God to Soldiers and Soldiers to God." As a chaplain, I visited with Soldiers in foxholes, in chow lines, or on five-mile hikes. Army chaplains go where the Soldiers go. That includes heading to faraway places like Afghanistan.

During my deployment in Afghanistan, I used my Lord's guidance, which was "Whoever wishes to be greatest amongst you must be the servant of all." I reminded myself, "It's about them, not about me." I tried to put others first. Sometimes I succeeded and sometimes I failed. Like everyone else I am not perfect, but thankfully I have a Lord who forgives. That forgiveness gives me a new chance to keep on serving the Lord by serving others.

During my years in the military, I often recall that God is there in the darkness and we need not fear. Now that my time in the South Dakota Guard is coming to an end, I look back with good memories and I see how the Lord always provided the right people at the right time to help turn this "pastor" into a chaplain. Looking back helps me know that the future is in God's hands and God will provide the right people for the future of the Chaplain Corps in the South Dakota National Guard.

CH (Col.) David Gunderson
State Chaplain SDARNG



We Want You!

The American Legion changed the course of history

In 1944, The American Legion wrote the original GI Bill.

From the *Greatest Generation* to the *Latest Generation*, we advocate for our Military, our Veterans and their Families, and for a strong America.

To read the rest of the story on the original GI Bill go to:

www.legion.org/education/history

JOIN THE AMERICAN LEGION TODAY AND HELP US PROTECT YOUR EARNED BENEFITS

TO FIND THE NEAREST AMERICAN LEGION POST....

Call: 605-886-3604 or email: sdlegion@dailypost.com

SNAPSHOTS



Soldiers from the 1742nd Transportation Company stand with country singer Aaron Tippin following a Valentines for Veterans event, Feb. 6, in Sioux Falls. (Photo by Spc. Dylan Clark)



Above: The National Guard's senior enlisted adviser, Command Chief Master Sgt. Mitchell O. Brush, visits with service members and their families during his tour of the South Dakota Air National Guard at Joe Foss Field, March 5. Members of the 114th FW and their families were given the opportunity to share their concerns and issues with Brush who advises the chief of the National Guard Bureau on all enlisted matters affecting training, effective utilization, health of the force, and enlisted professional development. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Luke Olson)



SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD

OPERATION

155th Eng.T

Sgt. Michael Dodge, Sgt. 1st Class Allan Baker and Sgt. Joseph Cross, members of the 155th Engineer Company, stand behind a barrier on Camp Buehring, Kuwait, that was painted and originally placed on Camp Doha, Kuwait during the 155th's 2002-2003 deployment. The three Soldiers have returned to Kuwait with the 155th for a second time, 14 years later. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tiphany Dvorak)

END

2002 - 2003

OTS



Colin Powell becomes the third generation Powell to be sworn into the South Dakota Army National Guard. Collin, 18, who enlisted Feb. 26 as a heavy equipment operator in the 842nd Engineer Company, joins his father, Capt. Jesse Powell, 196th Maneuver Enhancement, and his grandfather, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jay Powell, Training Center. (Courtesy photos)



Chief Warrant Officer 2 David Mack aims downrange at the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships, Feb. 28, at Camp Ripley, Minn. South Dakota's biathlon team competes in the championship every year. (Photo by Sgt. Mark VanDerpen)

South Dakota National Guard
2823 West Main Street
Rapid City, SD 57702

Affordable Excellence

PRINT

Simpsons
PRINTING

